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TRANSNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT

TECHNICAL REPORT NO. 3

(Covering activities of the period
November 1, 1968 to March 1, 1969)

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Research activities are reported on three topics within the area of conflict and conflict resolution: (1) Interpersonal bargaining. (a) The individual's pre-interaction orientation to the bargaining is found to be complexly related to his expectations about other's orientations. Competitive individuals expect others to be competitive but cooperative individuals expect the entire range of orientation, from cooperative to competitive. The theoretical significance of this result is discussed. (b) High incentives are found to have facilitative effects on the agreement process, but particularly so under conditions that are otherwise characterized by high conflict, viz, difficult bargaining problems and dyads with mixed or intermediate degrees of cooperative-competitive orientation. (2) The basis of ingroup-outgroup conflict: A rationale and procedure is presented for experimental investigation of the development of preferential behavior toward ingroup members as opposed to outgroup persons. (3) The effect of within-group relations on intergroup conflict: Pilot studies are described dealing with (a) the effects of homogeneity vs. heterogeneity of attitudes within a group upon its relations with an outgroup, and (b) the effects of the past history of treatment of a potentially disloyal and weaker subgroup (whether fair or unfair) upon the appeals made to it by the stronger subgroup for the purpose of preventing it from defecting to a competing outgroup.

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SUMMARY

A resumé is presented of the research activities of thirteen experimental social psychologists, from U.S. and European universities, who cooperate in investigations of conflict and conflict resolution processes in interpersonal and intergroup relations:

(1) "International" bargaining study: Analysis continues on data obtained from a bargaining study conducted at eight different laboratories. The recent analyses deal primarily with the effects of level of incentive upon the conflict resolution process. The overall effect of high incentives (an opportunity to make money rather than simply to win "points") is to facilitate the bargaining process and to increase the likelihood of successful agreement. However, closer analysis shows that the effects of the high incentive are selective. When the incentives are more valuable, although the overall tendency is for agreement to be reached more quickly, this is not true on early trials in the interaction. This is interpreted to indicate that the more important are the issues, the more time will be spent in early stages of the interaction in ironing out the interpersonal relations and arriving at agreements which then govern the remainder of the interaction. It is also found that the high incentive is particularly facilitative under conditions that are otherwise most difficult or for types of dyads which otherwise encounter most difficulty. It is also found that while the high incentive heightens the cooperativeness of initial orientation to the relationship, it has beneficial consequences over and beyond this initial effect. This suggests that the high incentive improves the course of the conflict resolution process in some manner that is independent of its effect upon the initial attitudes of the participants.

The data from this study have also been analyzed in terms of the relationship between individual's own orientations to the relationship before the interaction, and their expectations about how the typical other person will approach the relationship. Evidence is found for the hypothesis that persons who adopt a competitive orientation to the relationship will expect others to adopt a similarly competitive orientation, but persons who adopt a cooperative orientation will expect others to be different in this respect, ranging from cooperative to competitive.

(2) The basis of in-group out-group conflict; the rationale is presented for experimental studies of the minimal necessary conditions for them developing attitudes of preference and differential treatments of members of one's own group as opposed to members of out-groups. A procedure is described which unexpectedly reveals that seemingly insignificant categorization of a sample of boys into two groups leads to sharp favoritism toward members of one's own category. Plans are described for analyzing the conditions necessary for the development of this in-group preference, and for identifying the nature of the motivation involved.

(3) The effect of within-group relations on intergroup conflict. An experiment is underway which investigates the effects of homogeneity vs. heterogeneity of attitudes within a group upon its relations with an out-group with which it is in conflict. Results from this study are not yet available. A second study on the same general topic has been carried through the pilot test

stage. It concerns the arguments that more powerful members of a group address to a weaker sub-group in order to retain their loyalty in the face of invitations from a hostile out-group that they join it. Variations in these arguments are being examined as they are effected by the degree of similarity between members of the more powerful and less powerful sub-groups, and in relation to how the more powerful group has recently treated the weaker one, whether fairly or unfairly.

1. Research on information acquisition under conflict.

Research here has been conducted by Flament, Kelley, Lanzetta, and Nuttin. There is no further progress on this research to be reported at this time, since technical report number 2 dated October 31, 1968.

2. "International" bargaining experiment.

The research here has been conducted by Kelley, Shure, Deutsch, Faucheux, Lanzetta, Moscovici, Nuttin, Rabbie, and Thibaut. The general procedure and results of this study were described in technical report number 1. Further progress has been made on analyzing the data and preparing the full report of the study. Two major types of analyses have been conducted during the past four months.

(a) Analysis of the effects of high vs. low incentives. The experiment provides important results on the question of how bargaining behavior is effected by the level of incentive or the importance of the resources at issue. This is a very important matter in the experimental study of negotiation and conflict resolution: the results bear on the question of the possibility of generalizing from laboratory results to natural situations, and the laboratory results to date have been highly contradictory.

In the present experiment, subjects in the high incentive condition bargain for money and subjects in the low condition, for "points". The value of the money can be indicated by the fact that in the U.S. laboratories, subjects in the high incentive condition were able to accumulate approximately $4.25 each. (The amounts in the three European laboratories were smaller in terms of standard conversion rate but were probably equivalent to this amount psychologically.) As reported earlier, the overall effects of the high incentive condition, as compared with the low incentive condition, was to increase the rate of agreement (79% vs. 66%, $p < .001$) and to decrease the time required to reach agreement (44.5 seconds vs. 52.5 seconds, $p < .005$). However, closer analysis of the data shows that the high incentive effects are selective. An important fact is that the high incentive bargainers actually required somewhat more time to reach agreement on early trials, presumably as they dealt with the more important problem by formulating norms or agreements which were then effective on later trials. Also, the money condition was particularly effective in increasing the frequency of agreement under what were otherwise the most difficult conditions. Thus, the money conditions were greatly superior to the point conditions on the more difficult problems, that is when agreement required one or both of the subjects to make a temporary sacrifice. Also, types of pairs that were found to experience the greatest difficulty in the low incentive condition were particularly improved under the high incentive condition. Pairs which included a cooperative and a competitive person, and pairs which included two persons each halfway between cooperative and competitive in his stance, were found to do especially poorly under low incentive conditions. However, under the high incentive, these pairs were greatly improved in the frequency with which they resolved their conflicts, and took their expected place intermediate between pairs in which both members were either cooperative or competitive. This provides another instance in which the high incentive

condition seemed to introduce its advantages particularly for circumstances which under low incentive conditions were particularly difficult.

The effects of high incentives also seemed to vary from one laboratory to another, particularly in relation to the amount of time required to reach agreement (the interaction between laboratory and incentive level is significant at the .05 level). These site differences will be explored further, and will be closely examined in the light of site differences in the meaning of "cooperation" which have been identified in special analyses conducted by Shure and Barefoot.

The monetary incentive was found to have an effect upon orientations to the relationship even before the interaction began. Subjects in the money condition characterized themselves and the typical player as more cooperative in their pre-interaction ratings. This result raised the question of whether the high incentive has a positive effect on the interaction and its outcomes over and beyond its favorable effect upon initial attitudes and orientations. Recent analyses make it clear that its does have an additional effect. This analysis was made by classifying, within each incentive condition, the various dyads as to the pre-game orientations of the two players. Then, high and low incentive dyads are compared for each type. The results show quite clearly that no matter what type of dyad exists before the game (whether both members are cooperative, both competitive, one cooperative and the other competitive, etc.), those playing under high incentives then proceed more frequently and quickly to resolve the conflict component in their relationships.

(b) Relation between own orientation and expectations of others' orientations. The data from the "international" bargaining experiment have been analyzed to test an hypothesis suggested by recent research of Kelley and Stahelski conducted under another research grant. The hypothesis is that persons who adopt the competitive orientation to an interaction will expect others to adopt a similarly competitive orientation, but persons who adopt a cooperative orientation will expect others to differ in this respect, ranging from cooperative to competitive in their orientations. The results from the international bargaining study are strikingly consistent with this hypothesis. Furthermore, there seem to be differences among the eight laboratories (samples) in this respect, and these differences will also be examined in relation to what Shure and Barefoot have identified as different meanings attached to "cooperative" within the different samples.

The overall evidence provides important support for the final argument in a line of reasoning advanced by Kelley and Stahelski which deals with the relationship between a person's view of his social world and the way in which his behavior tends to shape and determine that world. The argument is that (a) in interactions between cooperative and competitive persons, the cooperative ones are induced to behave competitively, (b) by virtue of this fact, competitors misjudge the cooperators to have competitive intentions like their own, (c) the cooperative person but not the competitive ones are aware of what has occurred and of the competitors' dominant role in the relationship, and, therefore, (d) the competitive persons come to believe others are also generally competitive, but cooperative persons are aware that although some others are cooperative like themselves, there also exist different, competitive persons in

their social environments. This argument, of course, has important implications as a model of how a person's own orientation to his world, as it effects his behavior, tends to shape that world and thereby provide justification and support for that very orientation.

3. The basis of ingroup-outgroup conflict.

As reported in technical report number 2, a subcommittee headed by Tajfel and including Deutsch, Faucheux, and Flament, have begun work on the basis of differential behavior toward ingroups and outgroups.

A major characteristic of large-scale conflicts (such as, for example, in race, inter-ethnic and international relations) is the fact that behavior towards a given individual is determined by the category to which he is assigned. In situations which involve prejudice against a minority group or some form of international tension, the less information an individual has about another individual belonging to a category such as "Negro" or "national of country X", the more fully will his behavior towards the other be determined by the pre-existing notions. This behavior is likely to be modified later in directions determined by the subsequent individual interaction, but this does not mean that the previous global categorizations cease to act as a causal factor nor does it mean that behavior towards other members of the "outgroup category" will necessarily be affected.

Questionnaire studies are rarely able to unravel causal variables in these intergroup relationships. And small group studies have not ordinarily reflected the crucial variables which are at play when the relations between large groupings are involved. The interaction between members of such large groups rarely entail face-to-face contacts and direct, personal relations. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the psychological processes discovered in the study of face-to-face small groups are necessarily the same as those which characterize the development of intergroup relations at large. In addition, the methodological and procedural difficulties of intergroup studies have inhibited the growth of knowledge in this field. Part of the explanation for the infrequency of experimental studies of intergroup relations lies in the mistaken assumption that such studies inevitably require large numbers of subjects. In fact, research on relations between groups that are not in face-to-face contact permits an economy in experimentation due to the greater ability of the experimenter to program the experiences of the subjects in the experiment. The crucial psychological aspect of intergroup relations at large is that they are <u>not</u> based on individual interactions, but rather that individuals from the various groups interact and form their attitudes on the basis of previous interaction between groups as a whole, or conceptions about the nature of their interactions.

Experimental studies in this field present two possible advantages as compared with questionnaire studies or studies in complex field settings: (1) In situations in which the experimenter can "program the experiences of the subject", the various hypothetical causal factors responsible for intergroup attitudes can be systematically investigated and controlled. (2) The flexibility of experimental design allows the creation of situations in which the subsequent behavior is directly elicited and investigated. Some studies of this nature have been conducted by Tajfel. The procedure was as follows. Groups of

boys aged 14 - 15 were asked to estimate numbers of dots contained in clusters presented at rapid exposure. After this has been done, in one of the experimental conditions the subjects were told that in a situation such as this, some people tend consistently to under-estimate the number of dots in a cluster, others to over-estimate the number. In another condition, they were told that some people tend consistently to be more accurate than others in a task of this nature.

The boys were then led one by one to a large laboratory room in which individual cubicles were prepared. This was done in such a way that no subjects knew where another subject was, and there was no possibility whatsoever of communicating from one cubicle to another. In the first condition, each subject found on his table information as to whether he was an "over-estimator" or an "under-estimator"; in the second condition as to whether he was in the high or in the low accuracy group. The task for each of the subjects was to choose one term (such as, for example, 8/11) in an ordered matrix of 14 terms. There were 18 such choices to be made, each in a separate matrix. In six of the matrices, the choice was between another person from the subject's own group (e.g., another unknown "under-estimator", or "over-estimator", or high accuracy subject or low accuracy subject, as the case may be) and one unknown person from the other group. (For example, to choose the term "8/11" meant that the own-group person would receive 8 points and the person from the other group would receive 11 points.) In the second set of six matrices, the choice was between two people other than himself from the subject's own group; in the third set of six matrices, the choice was between two members of the other group. The subjects were told that at the end of the experiment each of them will receive the number of pennies equivalent to the number of points that were awarded to him by all the others.

The situation presented the following basic characteristics: the boys (coming from the same class in a school) knew each other well before the experiment; categorization into two groups was exclusively in terms of performance on the previous task of estimating dots; there was no possibility of knowing who was in the subject's own group and who in the other group; there was no instrumental value whatever in group membership. The matrices were so constructed that in the first set of six (choice between a member of own group and a member of the other group), an assessment could be made of the extent to which three major hypothetical determinants of choice played a role in the final choice. These were: preference for a member of own group; a strategy of achieving maximum joint payoff for all the subjects; and fairness. The latter two remain distinguishable in the two second sets of choices (between two members of own group and between two members of the other group).

The two conditions (over- and under-estimation, and better and worse accuracy) were introduced in the experiment as its aim was to find a "minimal social condition" in which categorization into two groups would not lead to differential intergroup behavior. The first of these two conditions implied no more than a flimsy perception of similarity of a subject with others who performed in a way similar to himself; the second, concerned with accuracy, added to this a value judgment in terms of "better" or "worse" performance. The expectation was that very little in the way of differential intergroup behavior would be manifest, and that if any was shown at all, it would be in the direction of revealing some first traces of differential behavior in the value

judgment condition. It will be remembered that obvious "rational" strategies were available to the subjects: choosing in the fairest possible manner, or choosing in such a way that all of them together would get as much money as possible out of the experiment.

The results turned out to be very highly significant in an unexpected direction. There were no differences between the two conditions, or between the two categories of subjects in each of the conditions. All groups showed in their choices a striking preference for members of their own category. At the same time, in the other two sets of choices offering the possibility of distributing points (and pennies) between two members of own category or between two members of the other category, the means of all the four groups are distributed very closely around the point of maximum fairness.

On the basis of this unexpected evidence that ingroup favoritism and outgroup rejection is so readily evoked, a subcommittee (Tajfel, Deutsch, Faucheux, and Flament) is proceeding with research to analyze the phenomenon. The first three met for two days in November, 1968, in New York City, to plan the further work. Special attention will be given to (1) analysis of the conditions necessary for the ingroup-outgroup differential, and (2) design of choice matrices to illuminate the nature of the motives involved in the differential treatment.

4. The effect of within-group relations upon intergroup relations.

Work in this area has been begun by Thibaut and Rabbie and there is now an active interest in the problem also on the part of Lanzetta, Mulder, and Pruitt. The research deals with the general question of the effect of conflict within a group upon its relations with an external group.

In technical report number 2, there was described an experimental procedure developed by Thibaut and Rabbie in March 1968. After pilot runs with this procedure, it has been modified and sharpened, and is presently being conducted formally in Rabbie's laboratory at Utrecht. The primary experimental variable is homogeneity vs. heterogeneity of attitudes within each group. The dependent variables focus upon the weakening or strengthening effects of this initial heterogeneity or homogeneity of attitudes.

A second experiment in the same general area has been planned and pretested in John Thibaut's laboratory at the University of North Carolina. The situation concerns the relationship between the more and less powerful subgroups within a given group and their relation to an outgroup which is seeking to induce the less powerful subgroup to break away and join it. The general conceptualization of the situation follows that of earlier experimental work by Thibaut and Faucheux on the question of when a more powerful member of a group may be induced to use his power justly and fairly in return for the lower power member's pledging continued loyalty to the group. The new experiment focuses upon members of the powerful subgroup and the kinds of arguments and proposals they make to the less powerful subgroup to maintain its loyalty to their coalition in the face of the outgroup's instigations of disloyalty. The two independent variables concern (1) similarity vs. dissimilarity between members of the two subgroups, and (2) whether the more powerful subgroup has recently

treated the lower group fairly or unfairly in the distribution of resources within the group. We are interested in how these circumstances will affect the type of appeal made to the lower group to maintain its loyalty, whether that appeal will be a moral one, referring to prior agreements and commitments; a promise of future concessions; threat of the use of force to maintain the coalition; appeal to basic similarities; emphasis on the attractiveness of the high power group; or emphasis upon the dangers of coalition with the outgroup.

The subcommittee working in this area will meet in April to discuss the results of the pilot experiments and the existing data, and will plan full scale replications of the two studies at several laboratories.